

Environment and Recreation Committee Meeting held at the John Clements Sports & Community Centre on Tuesday 18th March 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr C Argent (Chair), Cllr M Kane, Cllr J Bundy, Cllr G Gilbert, Cllr R Green and Cllr Mark Walby

In Attendance: The clerk, Mr Simon Crosier and two members of the public

2024/25/093 To receive apologies and approval for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mayger, Cllr South and Cllr Walker the reasons for which were noted and unanimously **approved**.

2024/25/094 Chair's Remarks

None.

2024/25/095 Public Participation

No requests to speak to Council were received.

2024/25/096 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2025

The minutes were unanimously **approved** by council and signed by the chair.

2024/25/097 To set allotment fees for the 2025-26 financial year and approve any actions

Council unanimously **resolved** to reinstate the yearly fee in full. This will double the fee for the 2024-25 financial year for each plot. **Action:** - The clerk will issue the annual fee letter to all tenants explaining the rental fee reinstatement.

2024/25/098 To set sports club fees for the 2025-26 financial year and approve any actions

The clerk had provided a roundup of the fees charged for the previous three years. Council resolved that fees should return to the level charged in 2022-23, except for junior football which will remain at the level charged in 2024-25. **Action:** - The clerk will inform each sports club of the Council's decision on fees.

2024/25/099 To approve the Tenancy Agreement, Allotment Shed Rules document, and the Allotment Shed Application Form and approve any actions.

Council considered the documents and unanimously **resolved** to approve the revised Tenancy Agreement, and the Allotment Shed Application Form. Council unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should investigate a deposit scheme in respect of the sheds and report back to Council via email. A majority decision via email will then be taken whether to support such a scheme and change the Allotment Shed Rules document accordingly. **Action:** - The clerk will investigate a deposit scheme and report back to the Committee. Any decision via email will be ratified at the April full Council meeting.

2024/25/100 To provide an update on the regular inspection of the allotment plots and approve any actions. Cllr Gilbert to update the committee

The clerk explained to the committee that he has contacted the tenants of four overgrown plots identified during the walkaround on Monday 18th February. Two of those tenants have replied and have tidied their plots.

Four other plots currently without tenant need to be levelled and a cover laid across the plot to prevent weed growth prior to offering to a new tenant. Council unanimously **resolved** for the clerk to source a suitable contractor and arrange for a quote. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the action prescribed by Council.

During the site visit it was also noted that several plot designation numbers were missing. Council unanimously **resolved** to adopt a sequential numbering system that does not include A and B after the number. **Action:** - The clerk will update the Scribe Allotment package with the new numbering system, along with filing records and will inform each plot holder of the new number.

Council also discussed setting the allotment fees in January each year, so that the fee letter could be issued to tenants in good time to pay the following years fee by 1st April. Council also discussed the letter confirming the 2025-26 fee to tenants and would like the 40-day deadline set out in the tenancy agreement to make payment, strictly adhered to with no chase letters being sent after this deadline. The tenant will lose the plot and this will be passed on to the next person on the waiting list should payment not be made on time. Council unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should add the setting of allotment fees to January's 2026 agenda for the Environment and Recreation Committee meeting and should add a paragraph to the allotment fee letter for 2025-26 stating the strict adherence to the 40-day deadline for Council to receive payment of the allotment fee. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the actions prescribed by Council.

2024/25/101 Clerk to update Council on the camera installation at the height barrier to identify deliveries to the JC and approve any actions

The clerk had, prior to the meeting, forwarded copies of the quotations to complete the work. This would total approximately £8.5k. Due to the costs involved, Council unanimously **resolved** not to proceed with the project. The clerk suggested that all users of the JC inform the clerk on a weekly basis of the contractors likely to need to operate the height barrier to gain access to the site. Anyone not on the list who phones the Parish Council for access will not be given the code. Council unanimously **agreed** that the clerk should seek to obtain this information on a weekly basis. **Action:** - The clerk will inform the contractors who provided quotations for the camera installation that the project is not proceeding.

2024/25/102 To consider the maintenance of the footpath from the JC to Tower Road and approve any actions

Cllr Kane confirmed that the footpath has narrowed due to grass incursion and the path is also subject to flooding. Council unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should arrange for the pathway to be cleared back to its original width and that the flooding issue will be monitored at this stage and revisited if this becomes a frequent issue. **Action:** The clerk will carry out the action prescribed by Council.

2024/25/103 To consider an email received from a member of the public concerning rubbish on the verges along Bury Lane and approve any actions

Council considered the request and unanimously **resolved** that a litter pick along the road to the bottom of the hill towards Nup End should be undertaken twice a year. **Action:** - The clerk will contact Andy Nolan to see if he would be interested in conducting the litter pick on the same basis as he was engaged by the Parish Council for Rabley Heath Road.

2024/25/104 To consider jet washing the patio outside the pavilion changing rooms the same time as the JC clean theirs and approve any actions

Council considered the idea and unanimously **resolved** that both areas should be cleaned at the same time to stop mud being transferred from the dirty section of the patio to the clean side. **Action:** - The clerk will contact Andy Nolan and ask for both areas to be cleaned at the same time.

2024/25/105 To consider pruning the trees in The Pound and approve any actions

Council debated the possibility of whether the trees in The Pound needed pruning. Council **agreed** that Cllr Argent should look at the trees and report back to the clerk. Council unanimously **resolved** that if the trees do need pruning that the clerk should initiate an application to North Herts Council to prune the trees and once permission has been received, should arrange for a tree surgeon to carry out the work. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the request of Council should the trees in The Pound need attention.

2024/25/106 To provide an update on submitting a request for s106 monies in respect of the inclusive roundabout for the play area at Bury Lane sports field and approve any actions

Cllr Kane confirmed that Taylor Wimpey is awaiting an invoice from North Herts Council to pay across the s106 monies. Council unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should enquire with North Herts Council when the invoice to Taylor Wimpey is likely to be issued. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the action prescribed by Council and report back.

2024/25/107 To discuss an update to the proposal received to allow walking cricket to take place at the sports field and approve any actions

The proposal received asked Council whether an artificial strip specifically for walking cricket can be installed. Council considered the request and raised the following queries: -

- Where would the proposed strip be located?
- Has the proposer considered a roll out pitch that would negate the need to install an artificial strip?

Council is happy to revisit the request if walking cricket becomes established at a regular fixture.

Council unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should inform the proposer of their stance and seek answers to the observations made. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the action prescribed by Council.

2024/25/0108 To discuss a quote received from Lamps & Tubes concerning the Christmas lighting display and approve any actions

The clerk had provided a quote for the Christmas lighting display for 2025 to the Councillors prior to the meeting. Council considered the quote and Cllr Argent had concerns that the section detailing the costs of pre-season works documented work that had been carried out in 2024 prior to the installation of the Christmas lighting. Council unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should query whether the pre-season works are necessary, but either way are happy to employ Lamps & Tubes for 2025 but may seek alternative quotes for the 2026 Christmas lighting display. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the action prescribed by Council.

2024/25/109 To consider the play area inspection reports, in particular remedial work required at the Valley Road play area and approve any actions

Council have considered the reports for all four play areas in Codicote and unanimously **agreed** that no action was required at this stage. Although several moderate risks had been identified in the report for the Valley Road play area and these were costed by the clerk, Council **agreed** that these issues were not urgent. It is hoped that any future works necessary at the Valley Road site will be covered by s106 monies in respect of The Close development.

2024/25/110 Cllr Argent and Bundy to update Council on the pavilion project, including quotations received for upgrading the electrics, hot water systems and the solar panels and approve any actions

The clerk had circulated the quotations received for the installation of solar panels along with storage batteries to Councillors prior to the meeting. Council considered the current s106 funds available for the upgrades (£37k) and decided that the project items needed to be prioritised as the funds are currently not enough to allow for all the projects to be undertaken. Council unanimously **resolved** that the electric and hot water system upgrades should proceed, and Cllr Bundy will shortly provide quotes for the work. Council also **resolved** that due to the costs of the solar panel installation project and the lengthy payback time, that this part of the project should be put on hold at the present time. A more pressing issue will be to upgrade the kitchen area and Council **agreed** that Cllr Bundy should obtain quotes for the work and bring these back to Council.

The clerk highlighted the fact that with the solar panel project being shelved at present that the electricity bill for the pavilion is approximately £280.00 per month now that there isn't a contract in place with an energy provider in anticipation of the go ahead being given for the installation of solar panels. Council unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should seek quotes for a fixed term contract for the electricity and bring these back to Council for approval. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the action prescribed by Council.

2024/25/111 To consider pruning the Walnut tree on The Green and approve any actions

The clerk confirmed that the Walnut tree was last pruned in 2022 and was now due its three yearly prune. Council unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should arrange for the Walnut tree on The Green to be pruned. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the action prescribed by Council.

2024/25/112 To consider replacing the locks on the pavilion and approve any actions

Cllr Bundy confirmed that the door locks on all four pavilion doors are becoming increasingly difficult to operate, with the lock on the door to the kitchen becoming particularly difficult. Council unanimously **resolved** that the door locks should be replaced with the same type of lock so that all four doors could be locked and unlocked using the same key. Council would

like a set of 10 keys for the locks. Cllr Argent will post a request on the We Love Codicote Facebook page asking for recommendations for a locksmith to carry out the work and pass the details onto the clerk. **Action:** - The clerk will seek quotes from the locksmiths for the work and select the contractor based on the quotes received.

2024/25/113 To discuss uneven ground created by a previously filled sinkhole between the tennis courts and approve any actions

The clerk confirmed that an email had been received from a tennis club representative highlighting the uneven ground between the courts which is now beginning to destabilise the concrete surface. Council unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should arrange for an appropriate contractor to look at the issue and provide a quote for works that need doing. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the action prescribed by Council.

2024/25/114 To consider an email received concerning the encroachment of a Hawthorn tree onto a property backing onto St Albans Road recreation ground and approve any actions

The clerk had circulated the email and associated pictures of the Hawthorn tree to Councillors prior to the meeting. Council considered the issue and unanimously **resolved** that the clerk should arrange for a tree surgeon to remove the tree. The residents, who were present at the meeting, are happy to replace the tree and Council **agreed** that this would be welcome with a tree of their choosing. **Action:** - The clerk will carry out the action prescribed by Council.

2 members of the public left the meeting

2024/25/115 To consider the significant reduction in proceeds from the Salvation Army in respect of the clothes bank and approve any actions

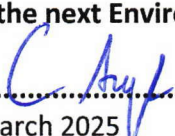
The clerk had circulated a letter confirming the sharp reduction in proceeds from the Salvation Army to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Council considered the situation and unanimously **resolved** that all future proceeds should be retained by the Salvation Army. **Action:** - The clerk will write to the Salvation Army and confirm that they can retain all future proceeds from the clothes bank.

2024/25/116 Matters for consideration at future meetings

None.

Meeting closed at 20.59 pm

The date of the next Environment/Recreation committee meeting is Tuesday 3rd June 2025.

Signed.....

Date: 18th March 2025